Best Practice Transfer for the Care Homes for the Elderly

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ABSTRACT: Best practices are those practices that have been shown to produce superior results, selected by a systematic process, and judged as exemplary, good, or successfully demonstrated. Simply put, transfer of best practice is defined as identifying and learning from best practices and applying them in a new configuration or new location to improve people's quality of life and living environment, resulting from a partnership between two or more actors or stakeholders. It has been proven to be sustainable in their social, economic, environmental and cultural components and/or through lasting changes in policy and decision making, use of resource and management systems. In any organisations "*things should go right and best"* for the management to flourish though "*work smarter, not harder"* will be added value for the practice delivered. Facilities Management (FM) is a hybrid management discipline that combines people, places and process management expertise to provide vital services in support of the organization. Also FM is aimed to deliver customer satisfaction and value for money through excellent support and technology for enhancement of the core business to meet emerging and changing social needs. The adaptation of "*best practice"* tools is not common place in Malaysian companies and organisations; hence, this paper gives an overview of PhD research work into "Opportunities of Transferring United Kingdom (UK) Best Practices for the Provision of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly in Malaysia to Meet Emerging and Changing Social Needs"

Keywords – *Best Practice Transfer, Best Practice, Care Homes*

INTRODUCTION

Facilities Management (FM) encompasses multiple disciplines of structures, processes and practices. It has emerged as a theory which has been systematically tested and has various logical interrelated propositions through research to explain social phenomenon integrated between people, place, process, practice and technology. As FM is a profession that encompasses multiple disciplines to ensure functionality of the built environment by integrating people, place, process and technology (International Facility Management Association-IFMA, 2006), transferring best practice is one of the management tools which is important for the enhancement of FM practice. O'Dell and Grayson (1998) simply defined best practice transfer as "identifying and learning from best practices and applying them in a new configuration or new location". It is usually driven by a corporate will to do something better, supported by technology and measured within credible frameworks (Jarrar and Zairi, 2000a). This paper seeks to explain a general understanding of the PhD research entitled Opportunities for the Transfer of United Kingdom (UK) Best Practices for the Provision of Care Homes for the Elderly in Malaysia.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

Bernard William Associates (1999) defines facilities as 'the premises and services required to accommodate and facilitate business activity' (Bernard William Associates, 2006). In other words, facilities are the infrastructure that supports business. This is a wide definition and is intended to cover not just land and buildings but other infrastructure such as telecommunications, equipment, furniture, security, childcare, catering, stationary, transport and satellite work environment. Amaratunga (2001) defined FM as "creating an environment that is conducive to carrying out the organisation's primary operations, taking an integrated view of the services infrastructure, and using this to deliver customer satisfaction and value for money through support for enhancement of the core business". Price (2002) provided the US Library of Congress definition that FM began to emerge as a body of understanding concerning "the

practice of co-ordinating the physical workplace with the people and work of the organisation and seeking to integrate aspects of business administration, property development and valuation, architecture and the behavioural and engineering science". The recent definition from the International Facility Management Association (IFMA), recognised FM as "a profession that encompasses multiple disciplines to ensure functionality of the built environment by integrating people, place, process and technology" (IFMA, 2006). British Institute of Facilities Management (BIFM) defined FM as "an integration of processes within an organisation to maintain and develop the agreed services which support and improve the effectiveness of its primary activities" (BIFM, 2006). Within the academic settings, Facilities Journal defined FM as "a hybrid management discipline that combines people, property and process management expertise to provide vital services in support of the organization. It is interested in all areas relating to briefing, design, construction and use of facilities and in the emerging technologies that support organizational functions at the workplace. FM is also interested in innovations in theory, tools, legislation, analysis techniques and applications of new ideas in the wide spectrum of the facilities management discipline" (Edward, 2005). Wallace (2000) noted, FM is not about 'contracting out' key services to external service providers. It is about establishing an integrated management and resources infrastructure that will enable the institution to meet the clearly identified and agreed requirements (needs, not wants) of its stakeholders.

STRATEGIC, TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL FACILITIES MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

Vinzant and Vinzant (1999) indicated that strategic management has evolved from an early emphasis on planning to become a comprehensive management approach that helps organisations align organisational direction with organisational goals to accomplish strategic change. Chandler (1962) in Vinzant and Vinzant (1999), defined it as "the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals. Steis (1985) in Vinzant and Vinzant (1999) defined strategic management as the process whereby goals and objectives are identified, policies are formulated, and strategies are selected in order to achieve the overall purposes or mission of an organisation. Bryson (1995) modelled the strategic planning process it consists of ten steps:

(1) Development of a plan for planning;
(2) Identification of organisational mandates;
(3) Clarifying organisational mission and values;
(4) External and internal environment assessment;
(5) Strategic issues identification;
(6) Strategy formulation;
(7) Strategy and plan review and adoption;
(8) Development of a description of the organisation in the future-its vision of success;
(9) Implementation; and
(10) Strategy and planning process reassessment

In other words, strategic management is a continuous process involving the "formulation and implementation of strategic plans, and the orchestration and carrying out of strategic activities of vital concern to the total organisation" (Koteen, 1991). In a more contemporary view, strategic management includes all the activities that lead to the development of plans, actions and policies to accomplish the strategic objectives of an organisation. However, the emergence of FM entailed the integration of people, technology, and support services so as to achieve an organisation's mission (Alexander, 1998). In FM, strategy is considered as a policy framework, which provides the context for decision making within the facilities department through the interaction between strategic, tactical and operational facilities management. FM corporate goals are usually about the core business task and the FM's aim is to synergistically balance current strategic, tactical and operational level of FM function with the needs of the future (Langston and Kristensen, 2002). Payne and Rees (1999) and Heavisides (2000) stated that FM is a change

agent between (People, Place and Process). Barrett and Baldry (2003) stated that paramount in the strategic FM process is the ability to establish, monitor and update strategic practice. Langston and Kristensen (2002) stated that strategic facility management represents higher order activities involved in the alignment of facilities with corporate goals. This includes a measure of anticipation and forward planning and demands access to boardroom-level discussions and/or effective communication between senior personnel. It is distinct from tactical and operational activities that have progressively reduced scope and corporate impact. To be effective, all parts of the organisation must be coordinated so that a common purpose is maintained. This is accomplished through a clearly articulated set of corporate goals and a team approach, particularly among upper management.

Table 1: Context and Classification of FM Function within the Care Home Practice

	Executive Responsibilities	Management Roles	Project Task	Care Home Practice
Strategic FM Activities * Represents higher order activities involved in the alignment of facilities with corporate goals. Includes a measure of anticipation and forward planning and demands access to boardroom-level discussions and/or effective communication between senior personnel.	- Mission statement - Business plan	- Investment appraisal - Real estate decisions - Premises strategy - Facility master planning - Information technology strategy	- Strategic studies - Estate utilisation - Corporate standards - Facilities management - Operational structure - Corporate brief	- Type of FM organisation/background - Decision making/higher level participants - Vision, mission, aim, objectives, strategy, value - Strategic Business Units (SBU's)/Strategic Divisions - Roles and functions
Tactical FM Activities * Essentially about monitoring and management of facility performance. They differ from strategies activities in that the direct link to corporate goal is absent, although the overall objective of improving quality, reducing cost and minimising risk remains.	- Corporate structure - Procurement policy	- Setting standards - Planning change - Resource management - Budget management	- Guideline documents - Project programme - FM job description - Prototype budgets - Database structure	- Good practice guidance & documents - Code of practice development - Legislations, standards, minimum standards, regulations - Assessment and audits, process controls, recognition from internal/ external experts
Operational FM Activities * Activities are more routine and are often viewed as custodial. For example, day to day operation at the care home such as schedule of meals, recreational activities, recording complaints, service user plan etc. They differ from tactical activities in that they do not involves analysis and judgement, but nevertheless are essential to the proper functioning of infrastructure which has obvious ramifications for business productivity.	- Service delivery - Quality control	- Managing share facilities - Building operations - Implementation - Audits - Emergencies	- Maintenance procurement - Refurbishment/fit out - Inventories - Post occupancy audits - Furniture procurement	- Choice of home - Health & personal care - Daily life & social activities - Complaints & protection - Environment - Staffing - Management administration

Source: Adopted from Langston & Krintensen (2002), Sulaiman et. al., (2006d) and Then & Akhlaghi (1992)

Accordingly, tactical FM activities are essentially about monitoring and management of facilities performance. The performance is based on the achievement of change agents practice in an FM ecosystem which consists of people, place and process in delivering organisation corporate goals. In the process of managing residential care homes for elderly, the tactical activities may involve the development of good practice guidance & documents, the identification of code of practice at the residential care home for the elderly, the legislations and regulations, standards development and reviews, the development of national minimum standards, assessment and audits, process controls, recognition from internal/ external experts etc. They differ from strategies activities in that the direct link to corporate goals is absent, although the overall objective of improving quality, reducing cost and minimising risk remains. Tactical activities are often smaller and tightly defined, and are akin to sub-projects within the greater business context (Langston and Kristensen, 2002). In addition, operational FM activities are activities which are more routine and are often viewed as custodial. It involves protective activities, watching over and safeguarding of the practice delivered at least at the minimum practice achievement as monitored by the tactical level of FM function. **Table 1** is trying to adapt the care home practice within the FM strategic, tactical and operational functions.

BEST PRACTICE TRANSFER

Damelio (1995) defined a practice as "a method or technique used to perform a process step". The process steps are performed by "people" which is the most valuable asset of the organisation (Langston and Kristensen, 2002). In organisations, processes involve individual, groups or teams of people (Amaratunga *et al.*, 2004). While FM involves the integration of people, technology, and support services to achieve an organisation's mission (Alexander, 1998), simultaneously, there is a close link between FM and human resource management known as "worker productivity" which can be understood as the productivity of their practices (Langston and Kristensen, 2002). Practices described "how people can perform a step within a work process" and certainly, best practices are "those methods or techniques that result in increased customer satisfaction when incorporated into their operation" (Sulaiman *et. al.,* 2006). As FM operates at three levels; strategic, tactical and operational, all level of FM practice underpins its corporate goals.

In terms of transferring best practice, Badshah (1998) believed that best practice transfer are "initiatives that have a tangible impact on improving people's quality of life and living environment; result from a partnership between two or more actors or stakeholders; and proven to be sustainable in their social, economic, environmental and cultural components and/or through lasting changes in policy and decision making, use of resources and management system". O'Dell and Grayson (1998) defined transfer as "identifying and learning from best practices and applying them in a new configuration or new location". Badshah (1998) stated that transfer is a process of learning which the key components of a transfer can be identified as "knowledge derived from real-world experience together with the human expertise capable of transforming that knowledge into social action". In the transferring processes an organisation recognises that another organisation has successfully implemented a solution for a set of problems or issues which the former is seeking to address and is willing to inspire its own actions based on lessons derived from that success. This implies not only a willingness to learn and a willingness to share, but also a willingness to change based on lessons learned. It is also a partnership endeavour, with both the "supplier" and the "demander" standing to learn and benefit from a well structured exchange". A transfer implies, at a minimum, the identification and awareness of solutions, the matching of demand for learning with a supply of experience and expertise and a series of steps that need to be taken to help bring about the desired change. Such change may range from policy reform, management systems, and technology to attitude to behavior. Jarrar and Zairi (2000a and 2000b) concluded that the best practice transfer processes are made up of six major stages as shown in **Figure 1** below. **Table 2** describes the phase and processes involves in Best Practice Transfer Process.

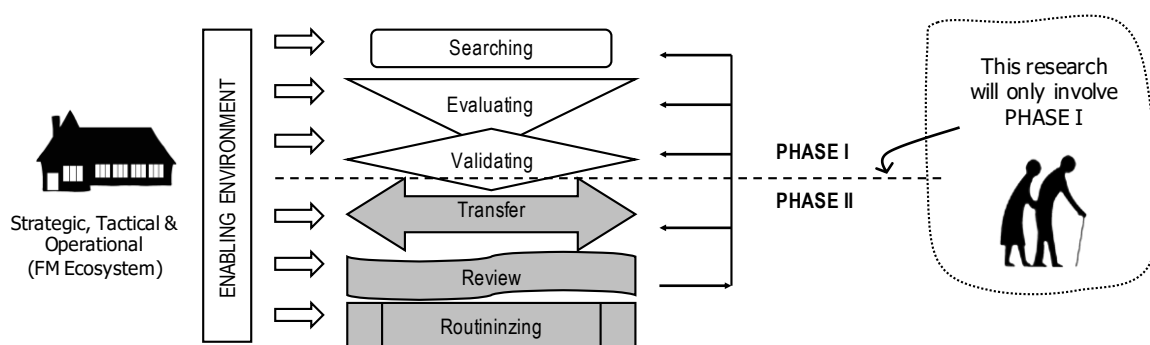**Figure 1**: The best practice process for transfer of best practice

Table 2: Phase and Processes in Best Practices Transfer

Phase	Process
PHASE 1: *Searching*	This phase is all about finding the best ideas wherever they are. However, findings best practices are very difficult
PHASE 2: *Evaluating*	Deciding on the value of different ideas in relation to the required intention and the project initiative in question. This stage is a very contextual and subject to the specific situation and group/person involved
PHASE 3: *Validating*	This is when the quality of each practice is scrutinized in greater depth and related to the impact it creates in terms of benefits. This stage is regarding deciding what is *'best'* and the validity of best practices
PHASE 4: *Implementing*	The process of adopting and adapting selected practices through effective project management and process focus. This phase has two main components: 1.) Enabling and 2.) Transfer
PHASE 5: *Reviewing*	Good practices are reviewed at two stages, initially by the process group or business unit. Before and after measurements normally can be seen over a minimum three months. However, some of internal transfer will only be reviewed after three years
PHASE 6: *Routinizing*	Making best practices part of the culture of works is the ultimate goal for complete and effective transfer

Sources: Adopted from Jarrar and Zairi (2000a; 2000b)

MANAGING CHANGE, BENEFITS, BARRIERS AND ENABLERS OF BEST PRACTICE TRANSFER

In the UK, during the last 20 years there have been many changes and developments within the health and social care system. Many of these have focused upon bringing clients' needs, rights and choice to the forefront. According to Thomas *et. al.,* (2003), by understanding and anticipating the response of others, organisations will be in a position to minimise the stress which can result from change. This continuous improvement process requires a systemic effort to prevent complacency and loss of competitiveness in organisation. As organisations have successfully adopted a philosophy of continuous improvement, the implementations of best practice transfer approaches have been aided. In the context of FM, changes may take place at the strategic, tactical or operational level of organisational structure and process. This was agreed by Vitzant and Vitzant (1999) who noted that leaders, managers, and line employees are exhorted to accept the inevitably of change arising from internal and external dynamics. Accordingly, Kitson *et. al.* (1998) and Froggatt (2001 & 2002) agreed that a prerequisite for the effective implementation of new developments is a culture of care that is receptive to learning and change. According to Thomas *et. al.,* (2003), stakeholders are likely to meet change with a series of reactions as below:

(1) Immobilisation. This is the initial response to change or loss. People are shocked and become immobilised. There will be a feeling of powerless and hopelessness;

(2) Minimisation. This stage involves resistance. People may seek to lessen the impact of change by reacting as though something less extreme is happening than is actually the case;

(3) Depression. People may well experience the full emotion of the loss brought with the change and will mourn and feel depressed by it;

(4) Bargaining. People then become aware that the change is happening and seek to take some control of it. They can not change it significantly but there is some room for making it more acceptable. This may be by seeing something positive in the change, by way of payoff;

(5) Acceptance. People then move to acceptance of the situation and can look towards a new beginning. The new situation will become their new reality.

It has been said that "Work smarter, not harder" is a cry commonly heard throughout business of all kinds, as an exhortation to boost organisational performance. If it can be captured what the top performers do, and implement it in one's own operations, the productivity, profitability and long term viability would receive a massive boost (Baker, 2001). American Productivity Quality Center (2006) stated that the process of finding, studying and implementing best practices provide the greatest opportunity for gaining a strategic, operational and financial advantage (APQC, 2006). According to Allee (1997), in the process of sharing and transferring best practices, a company examines the impact on corporate performance in terms of dollars saved, customer satisfaction, public favourability, and reduced cycle time. Haggi from Chevron Refining pointed out that effort to transfer best practices have helped his organisation overcome political and geographical barriers. It has produced both qualitative and quantitative benefits into his refining area for about five years such as the development of new technologies and cut the cost of the operations (Allee, 1997). Baker (2001) also added that there are several benefits of transferring best practice as follows:

(1) Low cost- in transferring best practice many of the sources of advice that have been covered have little or no cost attached to them. This is because they exist primarily to spread best practice rather than to make money for a particular provider; many are subsidised in some way, often from regional, national or European funding;

(2) No wasting time- learning from others means you don't have to waste time and resources reinventing the wheel- if someone has already developed an approach that clearly works for them and that you can see working for you, go ahead and run with it.

(3) Help to reduce pitfall- contact with practitioners can really help; they can tell you about the pitfalls they encountered, and how you can avoid them. They can also advice on introducing the programme in a staged way, so early efforts bear fruit, and the initiative generates its own momentum. If you try to do everything at once, you are almost bound to fail.

In addition to that, without a doubt, no two organisations are alike; there is no 'template' for how to go about the process. That said, a number of basic rules apply to all organisations looking to learn from others, whatever their size, sector or status (Lauren, 2004). One Baldrige winner stated that "We can have two plants right across the street from one another, and it's the damnedest thing to get them to transfer best practices"(O'Dell and Grayson, 1998). This happens in business, in health care, in government, and in education. Szulanski in Lauren (2004) mentioned that there are four main barriers that would arise in the transfer of best practice which depends upon knowledge, sources, and recipient criteria, economic and cultural background. Szulanski (1996), in O'Dell and Grayson (1998), found that there are several barriers in the process of best practice transfer as below:

(1) Ignorance. This is the biggest barrier in the process of transferring best practices. At most companies, particularly large ones, neither the "source" nor the "recipient" knew someone else had knowledge they required or would be interested in knowledge they had. The most common response from employees was either "I did not know that you needed this" or "I did not know that you had it".

(2) Absorptive Capacity of the Recipient. Even if a manager knew about the better practice, he or she may have had neither the resources (time or money) nor enough practical detail to implement it.

(3) Lack of Relationship between the Source and the Recipient Knowledge. i.e., the absence of a personal tie, credible and strong enough to justify listening to or helping each other, stood in the way of transfer.

(4) Time of Adoption. In house best practices took an average of 27 months to wind their way from one part of the organisation to another. Even when the practices were recognised it still took two years on average before other sites began actively trying to adopt the practices.

Furthermore, Jarrar and Zairi (2000a) and (2000b), also suggested that there are several criteria which also need to be determined at the early stage of transferring best practices. These criteria are needed when identifying the case study because they would be the success factors in the transferring best practice process. These include:

(1) Having common and consistent goals and linking best practice to the delivery of corporate objective;

(2) Translating goals and objectives throughout the organization and insisting on best practice and target against benchmarks;

(3) Generating organizational commitment by communicating clearly where the business needs to go and why it is important to embrace modern ideas and pioneering management thinking;

(4) Choosing champions to drive in best practices and encourage the process of dissemination and sharing;

(5) Resolving problems of empowerment and team leadership so that barriers to the transfer of best practices can be removed and obstacles totally eliminated;

(6) Reinforcing of required behavioural competencies;

(7) Driving the notion that power is in action and producing better results rather than for controlling individuals and stifling creative potential and good ideas;

(8) Encouraging a climate for the sharing of best practices;

(9) Providing a good IT infrastructure for supporting the sharing of best practices;

(10) Having good reward schemes and sending positive reinforcements throughout the organization is attempts to disseminate and share best practices;

(11) Demonstrating that adopted practices have managed to close a performance gap.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Realising the importance of transferring of best practice in the provision of residential care homes for the elderly, the following research questions have been identified.

(1) What are the best strategic, tactical and operational practices within the context of FM as applied in the provision of residential care homes for the elderly in the United Kingdom?

(2) What are the current strategic, tactical and operational practices within the context of FM currently being delivered for the provision of residential care homes for the elderly in Malaysia?

(3) To what extent a best practice approach at strategic, tactical and operational FM function have been established and empirically emerged in the context of Malaysia?

(4) Which enablers, barriers and benefits will Malaysia face if the Best Practice Transfer Process takes place?

(5) What lessons could be learned for the improvement of the provision of residential care homes for the elderly in Malaysia?

(6) What are the transferable strategic, tactical and operational practices needed for the residential care homes for the elderly to be transferred to Malaysia?

Defining research questions is probably the most important step to be taken in a research study, so a researcher should allow patience and sufficient time for this task (Yin, 2003). Miles and Huberman (1994) believed most research questions do not come out right on the first cut, no matter how experienced the researcher or how clear the domain of study. Research questions are those questions that the investigator would like answered in order to understand or explain the problem. It is also those questions that the data collection will attempt to answer (Creswell, 2003).

RESEARCH AIM

"The aim of qualitative research is open and also geared towards general exploration" (Sarantakos, 1997). "The sort of research aims is to reorientate our thinking, to make us question what we think we do know, and to focus on new aspects of our complex reality" (Phillips and Pugh, 2004). The aim of this research is to identify "Opportunities for the Transfer of United Kingdom (UK) Best Practices for the Provision of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly in Malaysia to Meet Emerging and Changing Social Needs"

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (2000) stated that the purpose, intent or objective statements indicate why you want to do the study and what you intend to accomplish. Creswell (2003) cited that the purpose statement conveys the overall intent of a proposed study and is the central controlling idea in a study. Based on the research aim, four research objectives have been established as below:

(1) To review and understand the provision of residential care homes in the United Kingdom and Malaysia;

(2) To identify the FM best practices strategically, tactically and operationally in the provision of residential care homes for the elderly in United Kingdom and Malaysia;

(3) To review and understand the Best Practice Transfer Model;

(4) To compare the practices between Malaysia and United Kingdom in the provision of residential care homes for the elderly;

(5) To test and validate UK practices for adoption into Malaysia.

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Methodology

Bell (1993) in Remenyi *et. al.,* (2002) stated "the case study approach is an umbrella term for a family of research methods having in common a decision to focus on an enquiry around specific instance or event". The term case study has multiple meanings. In research the case study can be used as valid and reliable evidence or a vehicle for creating a story or narrative description of the situation being studied (Remenyi, 2002). In conjunction with the researcher's interpretivism paradigm, Yin (2003) defined case studies in two ways of technical definition as the following.

   (1)   Empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and;

   (2)   Case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in triangulation fashion, and another result benefits from prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

Yin (2003) placed the research strategies in research as in **Table 3**. Each strategy has peculiar advantages and disadvantages, depending on three conditions: (a) the type of research question; (b) the control an investigator has over actual behavioural events and; (c) the focus on contemporary as opposed to historical phenomena. According to Yin (2003), a basic categorisation of research questions is the familiar series: "who", "what", "where", "how" and "why". This research can be considering exploratory case study as mentioned by Yin (2003) where if research questions focus mainly on "what" questions, either of two possibilities arise. First, some types of "what" questions are exploratory and the second type of "what" research questions actually form a "how many" or "how much" line of inquiry.

Table 3: Research Strategy

Strategy	Form of research question	Requires control of behavioural events?	Focuses on contemporary events
Experiment	How, why?	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, *what*, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes/No
Archival analysis	Who, *what*, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes
History	How, why?	No	No
Case study	How, why?	No	Yes

Note: *What* questions, when asked as part of an exploratory study, pertain to all five strategies

Methods

According to Gray (2004) triangulation is another way of improving the reliability of a study, that is, the use of multiple methods of data collection. Triangulation comes from a word drawn from the world of surveying where measurement is taken from three or more different points in order to identify a particular area with accuracy. Gray (2004) defined the method as "the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research questions or hypothesis". Yin (2003) stated that a case study's unique strength is "..its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence such as documents, artefacts, interviews and observation.." . "… a good case study will therefore want to use as many sources as possible.." (Yin, 2003). In this case,

multiple sources of evidence will be undertaken. Basically, there are four methods to be used in this research. There are content analysis, interviews, focus group interviews and participant observation. Content analysis will be used to gather the general national FM practice at the residential care homes for the elderly in Malaysia, while the practical primary field work activities will be engaged using interviews, focus group interviews, and participant observations research methods. These methods are designed within the context of FM practice at the residential care homes for the elderly in Malaysia based on the Holistic Versus Embedded Case Studies Case Study design as regarded by Yin (2003).

Qualitative data are usually in the form of words rather than numbers. "Qualitative data are sexy. They are a source of well grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts. With qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events led to which consequences, and derive fruitful explanations" (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Based on this explanation, to gather qualitative data interviewing is a commonly used method of collecting information from people. Interviewing as a research method typically involves the researcher asking questions and, hopefully, receiving answers from the respondents. Any person to person interaction between one or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind is called an interview (Kumar, 2003). This research has chosen person to person interview and group interview as the method. Instead of person to person interview, a combination of interviews is also possible to be undertaken by the researcher in qualitative research. The generic term group interview has tended recently to be used interchangeably with focus group. Focus group combines elements of both interviewing and participant observation. The focus group session is indeed, an interview (Patton, 1990) not a discussion group, problem solving session, or decision making group. The objective of focus group interview is to obtain high quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others, and where new ideas and perspectives can be introduced. Both methods will use semi structured interviews in terms of their content and structure.

Observation is "…a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place.." (Kumar, 2003). It is carried out by the human observer (Robson, 2004). Observational techniques are methods by which an individual or individuals gather firsthand data on programs, processes, or behaviours being studied (Frachtling, and Sharp, 1997). It involves the systematic viewing of people's actions and the recording, analysis and interpretation of their behaviour (Gray, 2004). It is a complex combination of sensation (sight, sound, touch, smell and even taste) and perception (Gray, 2004). Further, Kumar (2003) added that "When your are more interested in the behaviour than in the perceptions of individuals, or when subjects are so involved in the interaction that they are unable to provide objective information about it, observation is the best approach to collect the required information". Observation is more than just doing what comes naturally in social situations (Bachman & Schutt, 2003). It is a qualitative method for gathering data that involves developing a sustained relationship with people while they go about their normal activities. Hence, participant observation methods has been chosen which is defined as the participant observer is fully engaged in experiencing the project setting while at the same time trying to understand that setting through personal experience, observations, and interactions and discussions with other participants. It is the seminal field research method; a means for seeing the social world as the research subjects see it, in it's totally, and for understanding subjects' interpretations of that world (Wolcott, 1995). Philosophically, it involves symbolic interactionism which is through the interaction, a process of negotiation takes place through which they respond to others and adjust their understanding and behaviours to create a shared sense of reality (Gray, 2004). Participant observation is useful for gaining an understanding of the physical, social, cultural and economic contexts in which study participants live; the relationships among and between people, contexts, ideas, norms and events; and people's behaviours and activities-what they do, how frequently, and with whom (Mack *et. al*, 2005). In general, **Figure 2** and **Figure 3** show the relationship between case study methodology and its methods in the process of primary evidence gathering in this research.
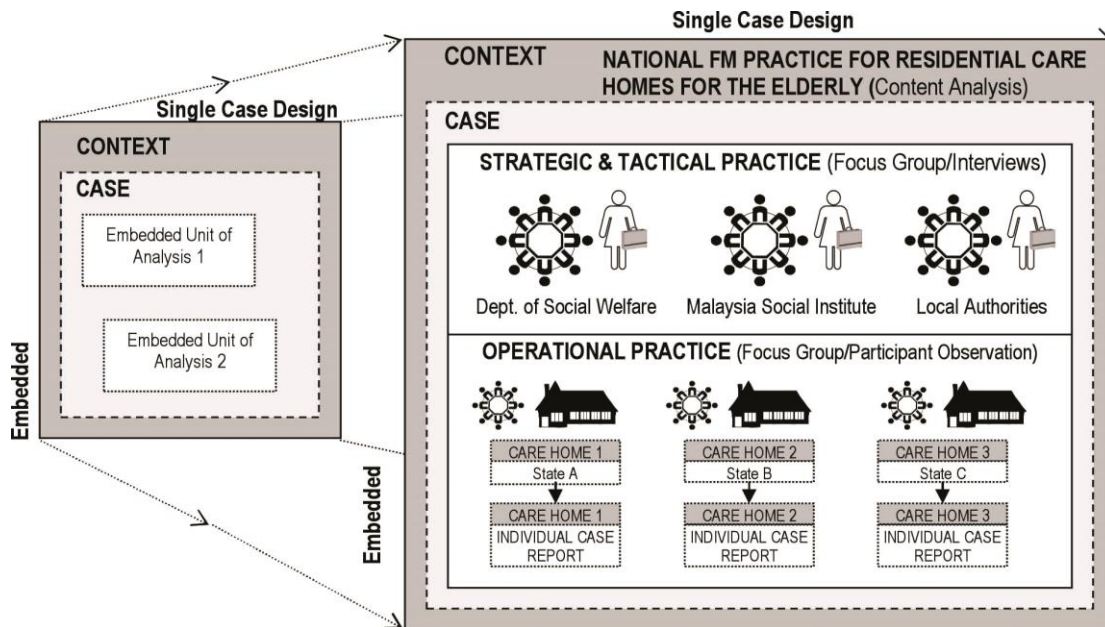
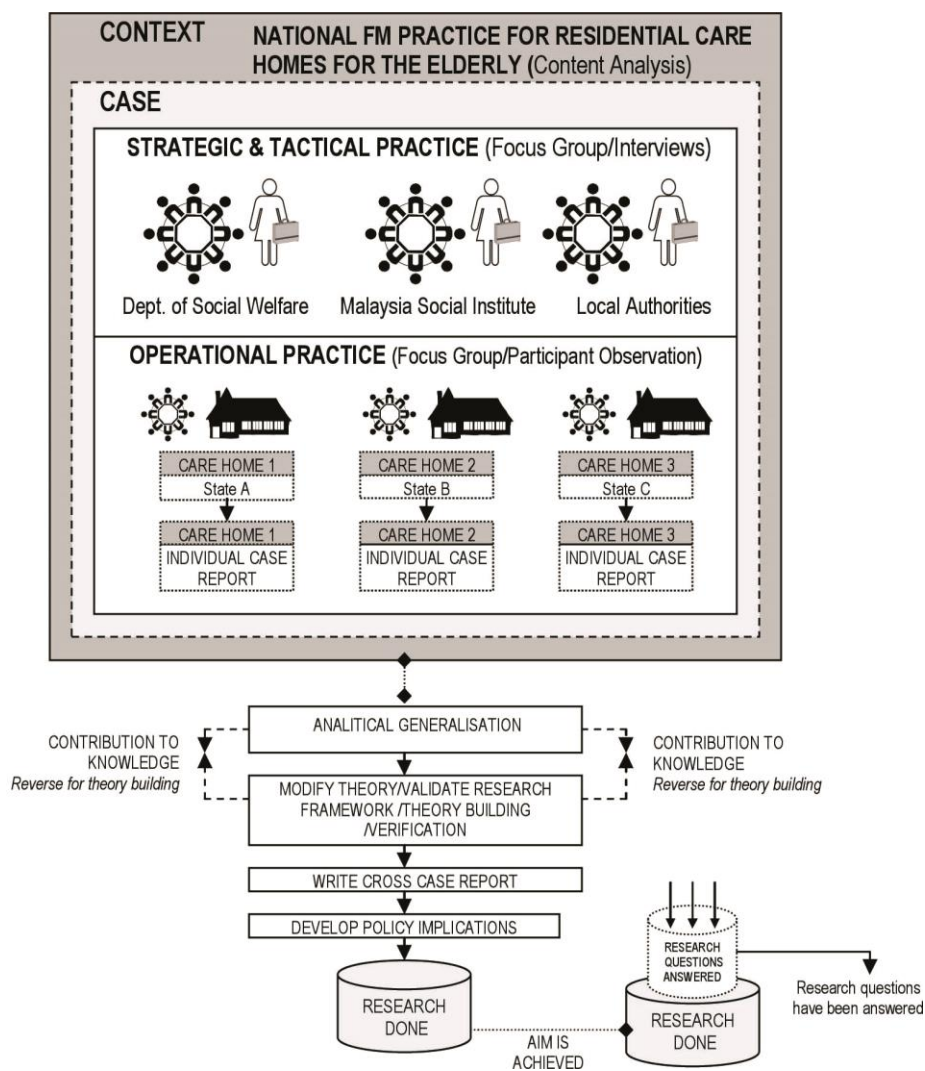**Figure 2:** Holistic Versus Embedded Case Studies

Figure 3: Next process in case study research methodology

As stated earlier, it can be seen that the FM function is clearly applied in the process of managing care homes for the elderly. As FM practices emerge in the strategic, tactical and operational level of organisation, in parallel the structure of care homes for the elderly provision in the UK and Malaysia is almost the same. Though there is a small difference of the stakeholder's roles, the structure is developed base on three FM functions which consist of strategic, tactical and operational. **Table 4** below shows the methods use in the process of primary data collection. The important stakeholders involved in the provision of the care home for the elderly are provider, inspectorate and care home manager. Also, it portrays that prospective respondents, prospective evidence and prospective methods will be undertaken in the primary data collection phase at the case study.

Table 4: Methods use in the process of primary data collection

Level of FM Function	Prospective Respondents Malaysia	Prospective Evidence/Data to be collected	Methods
* Represents higher order activities involved in the alignment of facilities with corporate goals. Includes a measure of anticipation and forward planning and demands access to boardroom-level discussions and/or effective communication between senior personnel.	Local Authorities and Department of Social Welfare	Provider background, decision makers, higher level participants, organisational structure, vision, mission, aim, objectives, strategy, value, Strategic Business Units (SBU's) Strategic Divisions, roles and functions. Barriers, enables, lessons learn, and benefits from transferring best practices	Interviews or focus group interviews
* Essentially about monitoring and management of facility performance. They differ from strategies activities in that the direct link to corporate goal is absent, although the overall objective of improving quality, reducing cost and minimising risk remains.	Malaysia Social Institute (MSI), Department of Health (DoH)	Good practice guidance & documents, Code of practice development, Legislations, standards, minimum standards, regulations, Assessment and audits, process controls, recognition from internal/ external experts Barriers, enables, lessons learn, and benefits from transferring best practices Outsourcing & contracting out strategy	Interviews or focus group interviews
* Activities are more routine and are often viewed as custodial. For example, day to day operation at the care home such as schedule of meals, recreational activities, recording complaints, service user plan etc. They differ from tactical activities in that they do not involves analysis and judgement, but nevertheless are essential to the proper functioning of infrastructure which has obvious ramifications for business productivity.	Department of Social Welfare Residential Care Home for the Elderly at the state of Selangor, Melaka and Kuala Lumpur	Barriers, enables, lessons learn, and benefits from transferring best practices	Participant Observations & Focus Group Interviews

SUMMARY

Based on the discussion it can be said that FM has emerged in the provision of care homes for the elderly. It is true that what FM promised is concerning the practice of co-ordinating any physical workplace with the people and work of the organisation and seeking to integrate all aspects of organisation administration, built and human environment correspond to the changing environment, science and technology. In a way to apply the best practice transfer

process for organisation continuous improvement, organisations must be willing to be understanding, anticipating the response of others organisation and try to identify why, how, what, when to adapt and adopt to change. Companies or organisations that share and seek out best practices demonstrate visible dedication to the renewal of organisational knowledge. In addition to this, as no two organisations are alike; there is no 'template' for how to go about the process. The process of best practice transfer will apparently generate a new FM generations which can "think global and act in a local way" which is willing to learn and respond for continuous improvement. Without doubt best practice has increasingly become a key part of the company culture as the organisation strives for world-class performance through the application of continuous improvement activities. Implementation of best practice at the every FM level, means each level's performance can be improved, and consequently the performance of the overall organisation will be improved. Organisationally, change may be imposed as a result of increased competition for business

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